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Cal Poly Professors to Receive Annual Distinguished Research Award

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly has named two longtime professors, both internationally known in their fields, to receive the university's Distinguished Research, Creative Activity, and Professional Development Award for 2004-05.

Mathematics Professor Estelle Basor and Management Professor Abraham ("Rami") Shani were recognized for outstanding accomplishments in their research endeavors. They will be honored at afternoon commencement ceremonies June 11 and during the university's Fall Conference General Session on Sept. 12.

This is the second year that the university is honoring its faculty with the Distinguished Research, Creative Activity and Professional Development Award. It was established in 2004 to recognize achievement in research, creative work and other professional development activities. It is intended to support research and other creative endeavors and to encourage faculty professional growth.

"This award acknowledges the important place of research, creative and scholarly activity in the careers of Cal Poly's outstanding and dedicated teaching faculty," said Cal Poly President Warren J. Baker. "Professors Basor and Shani's work in fields of expertise graphically illustrates the scope and breadth of our faculty's professional interests and competencies. They are very worthy recipients of this award, and we are pleased to publicly acknowledge their excellent work."

Basor, who lives in San Luis Obispo, was chosen for her work in the field of mathematical physics - in particular, her investigation of Toeplitz determinants and random matrix theory. Basor has a long list of colloquia and publications, as well as a distinguished record of continuous funding from the National Science Foundation. As "pure" and theoretical as her work may be, she has also cultivated a very strong connection between teaching and scholarship that has manifested itself in new courses and ambitious senior projects.

"Professor Basor has maintained a productive research program throughout her career that has become a model for faculty members at predominantly undergraduate institutions," says Philip Bailey, dean of the College of Science and Mathematics. "She often remarks that doing research reminds her of the process and challenge of learning new and complex ideas, an experience that helps her in guiding her students to mastering course material."

Basor has been teaching at Cal Poly since 1976. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969 and a Ph.D. in 1975 from UC Santa Cruz

Shani, who also lives in San Luis Obispo, was selected for his seminal work on sustainable work systems, which he describes as an attempt "to create actionable knowledge that advances science and simultaneously impacts practice." Shani has published numerous articles and four books. He also enjoys an international reputation. He was elected to the Executive Committee of the Academy of Management and he serves as a visiting professor at universities in China, Israel, Italy and Sweden. Considered one of the leading scholars in his department, Shani has served as a mentor for younger colleagues and has also been honored for his distinguished teaching.

"Rami continues to move into emerging research topics such as knowledge management and 'organizational' learning that leverage his international expertise in organizational behavior and design," says Dave Christy, dean of the Orfalea College of Business. "His academic leadership of the management faculty is marked with invitations to colleagues to join with him on projects, assistance in establishing research contacts, and creation of an environment where discussion of new ideas is always welcome."

Shani joined the Cal Poly faculty in 1983. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1972 from the University of Tel Aviv , a Master of Arts in 1978, and a Ph.D. in 1981 from Case Western Reserve University .

"Cal Poly is very pleased to honor professors Basor and Shani for their significant achievements in the area of research and professional development," said Interim Provost Bob Detweiler. "They epitomize the strengths of our faculty; the professional work they accomplish in their respective disciplines strengthens our university and benefits the students of Cal Poly."

Basor and Shani were selected from a group of 16 nominees and 8 finalists.

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